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ELOQUENT SPEECH BY HON. MR. CHAPLEAU.

THE ISSUE SQUARELY PLACED.

(From *The Gazette*, Montreal, March 18, 1878.)

The following is a report of the speech delivered by the Hon. Mr. Chapleau, at a mass meeting of the electors of Levis, held on the 10th instant:—

GENTLEMEN,—You have several times invited me to attend your political meetings, and in receiving yesterday another invitation from you, my first thought was that of my indebtedness towards you; and I have for this occasion forgotten the bad state of my health, which has so often deprived me of the pleasure of taking part in the political struggles of my friends, and have come here to meet you. One thing alone I regret, gentlemen, is that I do not consider myself equal to the task imposed upon me by the circumstances under which this meeting has been convened. Many amongst you have no doubt read the very flattering remarks passed on myself in some of the newspapers, and perhaps I may be allowed to own that I was more disposed than yourselves to lend a willing ear to these compliments. Notwithstanding these, however, I do not feel equal to the task of defending the cause I have come to defend. It is the liberty of the people which is at stake. We have to determine whether the people shall be governed by one single individual or whether they shall govern themselves; it has to be determined if the will of that one individual shall be substituted for the will of all, for the will of the large majority—in one word, if the Lieutenant-Governor reigns or governs in this Province. In the name of the Conservative party, of which I am proud to be the representative at this moment, to maintain that the principles of the English Constitution, of responsible government should still exist amongst us. That the trying contests which redounded to the honor of our nationality from the days of *Bedard* to those of *Cartier* have not been fought in vain, and that the due and legitimate control of the people over their own affairs is still a sacred right, whoever the man may be who sets himself against it. (Cheers.) A few days ago I had the honor of being one of the advisers of the head of the Executive. I owed that honor to the confidence of the people reposed in me, expressed in the voice of its representatives. The DeBoucherville Cabinet enjoyed the confidence of two-thirds of the vote of the Legislative Assembly. Suddenly I was dismissed as one of the advisers of the head of the Executive; and why? Had I lost the confidence of the people? No. Had I not done my duty? Nobody pretends so. I was dismissed by the sole will, by an arbitrary decision of the Lieutenant-Governor. The only question which you have therefore to decide is: with whom rests the power of making or unmaking Ministries, the

Lieutenant-Governor or the people? I therefore beg of you to ignore even the names of the former Ministers. I have just told you that I have been dismissed from office, forget even this. The friendship which you feel for me must not be of any weight in your judgments. Forget the names of Mr. DeBoucherville, Mr. Angers and all their other colleagues. Do not ask what may have been our personal interest in this contest; do not for one moment lower down this question to our own merits or demerits; think only of the great principles of constitutional law involved, which you must either abandon or vindicate. Were we great culprits, defaulters, thieves, the question would still be the same. The Ministry can have but one judge, and that judge is yourselves—you, the people. And you have the right to maintain in power whosoever you please. This is the only question at issue. (Cheers.) Every page of the history of Canada teems with the struggles which were fought to obtain from the British power the recognition of the principles of government. We did not always enjoy our liberty; time and courage were both expended in procuring it. I see before me old men—children; the former were the witnesses of the struggles for freedom, the latter, in astonishment and wonder look upon the beginning of an unexpected agitation; both have a common interest, the old to hold on to the points of so many struggles, the young to keep sacred the legacy of their forefathers. (Cheers.) Am I well understood? Do my accents reach your hearts? Do they reach that recess where the honor and the pride of the free born citizen hold their seat? (Cheers.) I think so. I call upon you to vindicate the first of your political liberties, to support responsible government in your midst—in a word, if you will allow me to make the comparison, to assert your political creed, as your spiritual pastor asks you to recite your religious articles of faith at the foot of the altar, and I am certain, beforehand, that in one case as in the other, there will not be found amongst you a single renegade (cheers). And here I hasten to make a declaration imposed upon me by a grand Conservative principle. The present contest seems to be engaged in between the members of the House on one side, and the Lieutenant-Governor on the other; but it is not so, the contest lies between the Conservative party and the self-styled Liberals. The DeBoucherville Cabinet were put out—that is the plain truth of it—by the Lieutenant-Governor; but he is not amenable to the people. He is the head of the Government according to English Parliamentary law, which means that he reigns but does not govern; that his

responsibility is always covered by that of his advisers—"the Crown can do no wrong." Those who have done this evil—those who have laid a criminal hand on this, the first of our rights, are the present new Ministers, who, as soon as they were appointed, became responsible, without exception, for all the acts accomplished by the Lieutenant-Governor from the moment the DeBoucherville Cabinet ceased to exist. It is an absolute principle that there can be no interruption in a ministerial responsibility, and this is why the acceptance of a portfolio has a retroactive effect as regards responsibility. (Cheers.) Mr. Joly was sworn Friday last, at twelve o'clock; in consequence he is responsible for the dismissal of the DeBoucherville Cabinet, as also of all the acts of the Lieutenant-Governor from the moment of this dismissal, and including the act of dismissal itself. I am well aware that the member entrusted with the task of informing the House of the formation of the new Cabinet has held a different opinion; but I am convinced that he now blushes at the idea of having for a moment entertained such a false opinion, a pretension so contrary to the first principles of politics. Let it then be well understood that I do not here attack the Lieutenant-Governor personally, but the Ministers who are responsible for his acts, and who are the only parties on trial before you. (Cheers.) As Conservatives, let us respect authority; let us respect the constitution; upholders of the federative principle of our institutions, let us preserve instead of destroying the halo which surrounds the dignity of the chief officer of an independent province. His Excellency the Honorable Luc Letellier is completely out of the question; Mr. Joly and the new Ministry are the guilty party. The conspirator, he who applied to Ottawa to devise this plot against the privileges of the people, is Mr. Joly. It is this gentleman who is supposed to have gone to Montreal to confer with George Brown to ask that great friend of our Province the secret which would give us political happiness; it is he who went to seek instructions from Mr. Mackenzie, so as to enable him to find the means of filching power in the Province of Quebec. (Cheers.) You have read in the newspapers' local news that His Excellency had travelled from Quebec to Montreal and to Ottawa. For my part I know nothing of this, the constitution forbids me to know anything about it; but what I know well is that there are responsible Ministers in this Province, and that they will be called upon to account for the senseless or criminal advice they have given to His Excellency. What are the facts? Here they are, as I find them in the official documents laid before the House, and which are now public property.

HISTORY OF THE QUESTION.

On the 26th February at 4.30 p.m. the DeBoucherville Government received a letter from His Excellency asking why the Government had submitted to the House a bill to compel the cities of Quebec and Montreal, as well as three or four other municipalities, to

pay the amount of their subscriptions to the railway from Quebec and Ottawa. In this letter the Lieutenant-Governor further complains that a measure imposing a new tax "had been submitted to the House without having previously received the consideration of the Lieutenant-Governor." On the 27th February, in the forenoon, the Premier brought to Spencer Wood the answer of the Cabinet to the Lieutenant-Governor. This answer was to the effect that the Railway Act was justified by the refusal of the municipalities to pay their subscriptions. It is well known that these subscriptions for the cities of Quebec and Montreal alone amounted to the enormous sum of nearly one million and a half. "In default of that sum," said the Premier, "the works would have been suspended, the interest of the money already paid on the road—over seven millions of dollars—would have been lost, and the Government would have been obliged to contract a new loan, and thereby impose an unjust tax on municipalities which had not entered into any agreement, and which were not to derive any immediate advantage from the construction of the road." The Premier afterwards justifies his conduct towards the Lieutenant Governor and the House, and concludes as follows:—"I beg your Excellency to believe that I never had any intention of arrogating to myself the right of having measures passed without your approval, and that, under existing circumstances, having had occasion to speak to your Excellency in reference to the law respecting the Provincial railway, and not having received any order to suspend it, I did not think your Excellency would discover in this measure any intention on my part to sight your prerogative, which no one is more disposed than I am to respect and uphold." After handing him this letter, the Premier held a conversation with the Lieutenant-Governor, who acknowledged the good faith of the Hon. Mr. DeBoucherville and his colleagues in the matter in question, and ended by saying "that the only difficulty which remained was the question of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway, and that he would give him an answer the following day, 28th February. On the following day the Premier returned to Spencer Wood, bringing the documents which the Lieutenant Governor had asked for. Another conversation took place, and on leaving Mr. DeBoucherville said: "If I understand rightly, you are hesitating about giving your sanction to the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway?" The Lieutenant-Governor said, "That's it." Up to that time we thought that the only consequence of the misunderstanding which seemed to have arisen between the first Minister and the head of the Executive would be the demand by the latter for the reservation of the Railway Bill for the consideration of His Excellency the Governor-General. We never imagined that the will of both Houses, so emphatically expressed in the discussions which had taken place since the 29th January last, was to have been despised and ignored. It was, therefore, with painful surprise that, on the 2nd March, we received the official memo-

random from the Lieutenant-Governor, dismissing Mr. DeBoucherville from his position as Premier, and with him all the members of his Cabinet. This document, gentlemen, will form one of the saddest pages in the political history of our country. I must declare that I regret it has been signed by one of my countrymen, and I deeply feel for those who advised the Lieutenant-Governor on this occasion. (Cheers.) In this memorandum the Lieutenant-Governor again bears testimony to the good faith of Mr. DeBoucherville; he specially exonerates Hon. Messrs. Angers and Church, who, he admits, "have not wittingly done anything which was not in conformity with the duties of their office." After a long dissertation on the circumstances under which the Premier had submitted to the Legislature the two Railway Acts and the new tax, he concludes as follows:—"For all these reasons, therefore, the Lieutenant Governor cannot conclude this memorandum without expressing to the Premier the regret which he feels in being no longer able to retain him in his position contrary to the rights and prerogatives of the Crown." Being thus formally dismissed, Mr. DeBoucherville at once wrote the following letter and delivered it personally to the Lieutenant-Governor at Spencer Wood:—

"QUEBEC, March 2, 1878.

"To His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec:—

"May it please Your Excellency,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your memorandum, in which you come to the conclusion that you cannot retain me in my position of Premier. I have, therefore, no other duty to perform beyond submitting to my dismissal from office, communicated by Your Excellency, reiterating at the same time my profound respect for the rights and prerogatives of the Crown, and my devotion to the interests of our Province."

I have the honor to be Your Excellency's, &c., &c.,

(Signed),

"C. B. DEBOUCHERVILLE."

There is the bare history of this *coup d'état*, the first of the kind in our history. In the worst days of the Craigs and Metcalfes, no such events took place. Then, the adherents of those autocratic Governors possessed the science of politics and diplomacy, but when you are aware that these documents bearing the imprint of absolutism which I have just read, were inspired by men professing advanced Liberalism, one is tempted to enquire whether they were inspired by hypocrisy or ignorance. (Cheers.) You now perceive, gentlemen, that we have not resigned. In official language we have not been maintained in our position; in ordinary language, we have been dismissed, put out. I shall now ask you this question: according to English constitutional law, has the chief of the executive the right to dismiss a cabinet who evidently possesses the confidence of the representatives elected by the people? I answer, No. (Loud cheers.)

THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION.

My intention, gentlemen, is not to show off here any erudition; but you will allow me to read to you a few quotations of an author who is an authority on the subject. I read from Bagehot's English Constitution:—

"* * * * * The Queen can hardly now refuse a defeated minister the chance of a dissolution any more than she can dissolve in the time of an undefeated one, and without his consent."

"An English monarch should not dissolve Parliament against the will and the interest of a ministry which is in power. No doubt the King can dismiss such a ministry, and replace it by another administration, whose advice to dissolve Parliament he could take, but even with this precaution to act thus towards a ministry which had a strong majority in Parliament, would be to strike a blow which it is almost impossible to suppose. We do not believe that Queen Victoria herself, in spite of the popularity and respect by which she is surrounded to a greater extent perhaps than any of her predecessors, would even have recourse to such a measure. What would be thought if she should venture to reason thus:—

"The Whigs are in a majority in the existing Parliament, but I think that the country would favor a Tory administration. Let us, therefore, dissolve Parliament, and see whether the country will not elect a Parliament of opposite opinions to those which prevail in the present Parliament. What would be thought? so Englishmen can dream even of a catastrophe of this nature, and which to him appears to belong to the phenomena of a world altogether different from that which he inhabits. In practice, in England, the Sovereign considers himself obliged to follow the advice of the Ministry which the House of Commons desires to maintain in power. All prerogatives at variance with this principle have fallen into disuse. A Sovereign may accord to a Ministry the opportunity of securing, by an appeal to the people, the majority which is denied it in the House of Commons. But to strike from being, so to speak, and to struggle by means of an appeal to the country, a Ministry sustained by the existing Parliament, would be an event which no longer enters into the calculation, although in former times there were instances of this recorded in our annals."

"Principle shows that the power of dismissing a Government with which Parliament is satisfied, and of dissolving that Parliament upon an appeal to the people, is not a power which a common hereditary monarch will be able beneficially to exercise. Accordingly this power has almost, if not quite, dropped out of the reality of our constitution. Nothing, perhaps, would more surprise the English people than if the Queen, by a *coup d'état*, and on a sudden, destroyed a Ministry firm in the allegiance and secure of a majority in Parliament. That power indisputably, in theory belongs to her; but it has passed so far away from the minds of men, that it would terrify them, if she used it, like a volcanic eruption from Primrose Hill."

Would you prefer an authority more familiar to you—I mean our popular and beloved Governor-General, Lord Dufferin? Here are the words he uttered in 1873 at a dinner offered to him at Halifax, in the midst of the discussions created by the Pacific affair, when he was asked to dismiss his Ministers:—

"My only guiding star in the conduct and maintenance of my official relations with your public men is the Parliament of Canada."

"* * * I believe in Parliament no matter which way it votes, and to those men alone who are the deliberate will of the confederated Parliament of Canada may assign me as my responsible advisers, can I give my confidence. Whether they are the heads of this Party or of that Party must be a matter of indifference to the Governor-General. So long as they are maintained in Parliament in their position, so long is he bound to give them his unreserved confidence, to defer to their advice, and loyally assist them with his counsels. As a reasonable being he cannot help having convictions upon the merits of different policies; but these considerations are not, as such, speculative, and devoid of practical effect in his official relations. As the head of a constitutional State, as engaged in the administration of Parliamentary Government, he (the Governor-General) has no political friends, still

less need he have political enemies. The possession, or even the being suspected of possessing such, destroys his usefulness."

But why so many quotations? Why insist on an elementary principle? Is it not that, in 1878, forty years after having obtained responsible government in this country, after forty years of hard struggles, we are again obliged to discuss the great principle of parliamentary sovereignty? (Cheers.) To whom do we owe this state of things? Who are those who dare throw to the winds the code of our liberties? It is the self-styled Liberal party. (Cheers.) What a sublime mockery! What a profanation of a title borne by men who, notwithstanding the errors into which they have fallen, had at least the one merit of appearing to love sincerely the liberty of their country. (Cheers.) I now understand how it is that many good and sincere men have resolved to abandon the title. I know that there are in this town men of spirit who have openly expressed their determination to cut themselves away from a party which has nothing liberal in it but the name; and this schism of which you are witnesses is only the beginning of the terrible reaction which will take place in the Province.

THE ABSENCE OF PRETEXT.

I have brought to your memory constitutional law. Let us go farther. Let us ask if there was even a pretext to justify a deviation from the ordinary course. And who shall we take as a judge in the case? None other than the Lieutenant-Governor. Here are the words of His Excellency in his letter of March 1st:

"The Lieutenant-Governor, taking into consideration the communication made to him verbally (on the 27th February) by the Premier, and also taking into consideration the letter that the Premier gave to him, is ready to admit that there had been no intention on behalf of the Premier to slight the prerogatives of the Crown, and that there was only, on his part, an error committed in good faith in the interpretation that he gave to words used by the Lieutenant-Governor in the interview which they had on the 19th of February instant, words which did not imply the authorization attributed to them by the Premier. With this interpretation, and the instructions in consequence given by the Premier to the Hon. Messrs. Angers and Church, these gentlemen did not wilfully do anything against the duties of their office. As to the blank which the Lieutenant-Governor addressed to him from Rivière du Loup, the Lieutenant-Governor knew that such blank was to be used for the purpose of submitting the estimates to the House. This act was a token of confidence on his part, as stated by the Premier in his letter of the 27th, but it was confidential. The Lieutenant-Governor deems it his duty to observe that in his memorandum of the 25th of February instant, he in no way expressed the opinion that he thought that the Premier ever had the intention of arrogating to himself the right of having measures passed without his approval, or of slighting the prerogatives of the representative of the Crown."

Here, then, on one hand we have authorities which prove that the Lieutenant-Governor had no right to dismiss the Ministers who still possessed the confidence of the House, and on the other the evidence of the Lieutenant-Governor himself as to the good faith of his Ministers. I admit that good faith does not prevent errors, and I will even

go so far as to suppose for an instant that we were mistaken. Well, even in that case, it seems to me that we were entitled to greater consideration on the part of the chief of the state. The authors who have written on constitutional law call the head of the Cabinet "the first friend" of the Sovereign. But when this friend is to be credited first with good faith, and next with the support of two-thirds of the representatives of the nation, the Sovereign should pause before breaking off such a friendship. But, after all, what are our grievances? The first, as stated by the Lieutenant-Governor in his memorandum, is—

"It results, therefore, 1st, that although the Lieutenant-Governor has made several representations in his quality of representative of the Crown, to the Premier, on various subjects of public interest, his advisers have taken animadversions and legislative steps contrary to such representations, and without having previously notified him; 2nd, that the Lieutenant-Governor has, without evil motive, but in fact been placed in a false position, by being exposed to a conflict with the desires of the Legislature, which he acknowledges to be paramount when these desires are expressed in a constitutional manner."

But this is no offence. In the House we are, in the Ministry we were the lawful representatives of the people. If conflict there had been between the will of the Lieutenant-Governor and the will of the people as expressed by us, it is because the Lieutenant-Governor so willed it. He has no right to impose his views on Parliament; the people have the incontestible right to force their views in the Legislature. There should never be a conflict between the head of the Government and the people, but if it should arise it is the duty of the head of the Government to give way. (Cheers.) Is this a revolutionary doctrine? Do I exaggerate the rights of the people? No, gentlemen; my name of Conservative would be sufficient to drive away any suspicion of the kind from the minds of my adversaries. But I know the history of England; I know that the English sovereign reigns now as gloriously as ever, but governs less, and I but ask that in this country, on American soil, amidst a democratic people, where the governing body, great or small, springs from the people, the prerogatives of the Crown be not overrated to any greater extent than is done by the Queen of England, who inherits her rights through a time-honored tradition—(cheers). Now, Her Majesty Queen Victoria, who has reigned for forty-one years, has never exercised her right of veto. Now, gentlemen, if I were allowed to place Mr. Senator Letellier de St. Just against the present Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec, I would quote these words expressed in Parliament at Ottawa on the 13th of August, 1873:—

"The royal prerogative ought not to be employed to overthrow the popular liberties; on the contrary, it must follow the march of events in conformity with the interests of the people duly represented. If that were not so, Parliament might be dispensed with, and the people once more compelled by the stick to obey the broom without respect to national representation."

This quotation shows you what I told you a moment ago: that the actual advisers of

the Lieutenant-Governor do not know the political history of their country. Another charge is laid to our account; I find it thus expressed in the memorandum:—"The Lieutenant-Governor, after mature deliberation, cannot accept the advice of the Premier in reference to the sanction to be given the Railway bill intitled 'An Act relating to the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa & Occidental Railway.'" In reply, I will simply say: 1st. That the DeBoucherville Government never advised His Excellency on the subject, for the very simple reason that they were dismissed before they had the opportunity of doing so. 2. That if it had had the opportunity, the DeBoucherville Government would have advised His Excellency to refer the sanction of the law in question to the Governor-General, as our constitution empowered him to do; he then, according to the terms of the Ministerial explanations in the votes and proceedings of the sitting of Friday, the 8th instant, "would have recommended that it be reserved for the decision of the Governor-General." And did not the Lieutenant-Governor himself admit the same thing when Mr. DeBoucherville said to him, "If I rightly understand your Excellency, the only difficulty which now remains is to know whether you will sanction or reserve this bill;" and when he answered "Yes?" Either one thing or the other; either the Lieutenant-Governor intended to reserve this bill, and in that case, he was prepared to accept the advice of his Ministers, which was a reason for keeping them in power instead of expelling them; or else he wished to put his veto on the measure, and, in this case, he formally belied himself, when, on the day of prorogation, he merely reserved the bill for the consideration of the Federal authorities. Still another grievance. We are reproached with having authorized "the enormous expenditure occasioned by "very large subsidies to several railways, "when the Province was burdened with the "construction of the trunk line of railway "from Quebec to Ottawa, which should prevail "over all others, and this at a time when our "finances compelled us to raise loans disproportionate to our revenue." This reproach is puerile, and I might even go so far as to say, strongly savoring of absurdity. The expenses here referred to relate to the South Shore railways—that is, the Levis and Kennebec, the Quebec Central and the Intercolonial, either for the past or the present. As for the past the Lieutenant-Governor himself sanctioned this very measure last year; as to the future he even yesterday sanctioned a law which after all, is only a continuation of last year's legislation on these railways. (Cheers.) It may well be asked by what process of reasoning, after having made a reproach of a cause for dismissal from office of this very legislation, it came to be sanctioned afterwards in its pure and simple form. Perhaps at the last moment it was perceived that this legislation did not entail any additional expense on the Province, and that it merely authorized, in a different shape, the employment of the grant made to these railways by a previous law. (Cheers.) Another grievance just as serious, is "the increase of

the salaries in the Civil Service." But what were the advisers of His Excellency thinking about when they dicted this singular document? A few moments ago I was discussing the elementary principles of politics, and I was astonished the new Ministers should ignore them; here I have to remind them of statutes passed last year, under which this increase became obligatory this year. This law, besides, was but the consequence of another statute which obliges each employee in the Civil Service to deposit five per cent. of his salary in a pension fund. Moreover, I cannot understand by virtue of what right His Excellency was advised to interfere in the minor details of the Civil Service, when the Houses, to whom the item of this expenditure were communicated, according to law, within the past fifteen days of the session, did not make any complaint. The Chief of the Executive should be above such trifles, for when his advisers drag him into such proceedings, do they not expose him to reprisals disagreeable and offensive to himself? What would be said, for instance, if anyone should attempt to lecture him on the domestic economy of Spencer Wood? (Cheers.) The Lieutenant-Governor also reproaches his first Minister in general terms for not having followed his recommendations in the various questions of legislation and administration which have arisen since last year. I am astounded that His Excellency should have been advised to make any such criticism, which is the formal denial of responsible government; what! it is known that the Lieutenant-Governor was chosen from among the men who were in active political service, and that he had just come out of the desperate struggle of 1873, and this is the man who is to inspire and conduct with absolute power the politics of the Province. (Cheers.) Why, we might as well pretend that the majority of the Houses in the Quebec Legislature should be held to bow to the ideas and the prejudices, not to say the whims, of the man who might be sent to us every five years by the Federal Government! (Cheers.) Knowing the political sympathies of the former Senator, should not the new Lieutenant-Governor have been advised to exercise the most prudent reserve in all questions on which his political friends had expressed an opinion? Do they believe that it is a salutary lesson for the people, and such as to inspire them with the respect due to authority to see every pretension of a party echoed in the manifesto of their chief, who expels from power a Ministry supported by the majority of the representatives in the lower and upper Houses? (Cheers.)

WHAT ENGLISH STATESMEN SAY.

What a distance intervenes between this position and the grand principles set forth by English statesmen! Lord Derby, writing to a Governor of Nova Scotia, advised him to keep strictly neutral in the political struggles of that Province, and said:—

"The object with which I recommend to you this course is that of making it apparent that any transfer which may take place of political power from the hands of one party in the Province to those of another, is the result, not of an act of yours, but of the wishes of the people

themselves, as shown by the difficulty experienced by the retiring party in carrying on the Government of the Province according to the forms of the Constitution. To this I attach great importance. I have, therefore, to instruct you to abstain from changing your executive Council until it shall become perfectly clear that they are unable, with such fair support from yourself as they have a right to expect, to carry on the Government of the Province satisfactorily, and command the confidence of the Legislature."

Lord Grey, expressing an opinion on the interference of Lord Metcalfe in dismissing his Ministry in 1843, expressed himself as follows:—

"The effect of this intervention was to place him in direct hostility with one of the great parties into which the colony was divided. Though the difficulty of carrying on the Government was thus obviated for the moment, as the party into whose hands he had thrown himself possessed a small majority in the Assembly, this advantage was dearly purchased by the circumstance that the Parliamentary opposition was no longer directed merely against the advisers of the Governor, but against the Governor himself and the British Government, of which he was the organ.

"Nor was this all; the Governor, by his rupture with one party, was placed to a far greater degree than was desirable in the power of the other, by which he was supported, and lost the means of exercising his proper authority in checking any departure from moderation on the part of those by whose assistance he was compelled to carry on the Government."

This is also May's opinion:—

"The Governor, like the Sovereign whom he represents, holds himself aloof from and superior to parties; and governs through constitutional advisers, who have acquired an ascendancy in the Legislature. He leaves contending parties to fight out their own battles, and by admitting the stronger party to his councils, brings the executive authority into harmony with popular sentiments."

And these ideas are not confined to the Sovereign alone. Speaking of a Constitutional monarch, a distinguished author, Hearn, remarks:—

"In matters of general legislation, the King, whatever may be his personal views, consults the wishes, however erroneous he may deem them, of his subjects, when those wishes have been deliberately formed in a clearly expressed, by the House of Commons."

And as Bagehot somewhere says:—

"A king of sense and sagacity would say to his Minister: 'The responsibility of these measures is upon you; whatever you think best must be done; whatever you think best shall have my full and effectual support. But you will observe that for this reason and for this reason what you propose to do is bad; for this reason and for that reason what you do not propose is better. I do not oppose—it is my duty not to oppose—but observe that I warn.'"

It was in this sense that George the Fourth went no further than to express his discontent with his Ministers, in language not always the most select; but it was then remarked, "The King would rather advise his Ministers than dismiss them." But, gentlemen, why quote so many authorities? Why search throughout the annals of the English people, who are the model of all constitutional government? Nowhere can a precedent be found to excuse the act which has just been committed. (Cheers.) What has been arrived at here, and what has been accomplished, is neither more nor less than the flinging of power by ambitious parties unable to attain it by constitutional means.

The people were not with these men, the representatives of the nation would not countenance them; they therefore deceived the representative of the sovereign power to take possession of that power which they did not deserve to hold. The reins of power belong to the First Minister, in whose hands the sovereign has placed them, on the expression of the will of the people. These reins of power must be given up by the Premier whenever public confidence is withdrawn from his Ministers. The Sovereign himself may call for them, when the representatives of the public desire it; but never, in any case, can he snatch them, or rob them, to use plain language. That is what is being done to us. But let them take care. Terrible shall be the results when the people shall come to vindicate their legislative supremacy! Then it shall be said, with as much reason as it was lately said in Europe, that "he must submit or resign."

THE PRETENCE OF THE NEW MINISTRY.

It is true that having no moral principle, they aimed at being skilful and cunning. With the dissolution of Parliament they place before the people an allurements which they believe to be irresistible. They say to the same people whom they know to be good and credulous, that this event has taken place altogether for their welfare; that it is in their interest that the constitution is thus violated; that it is in order to prevent their being heavily taxed that a prevaricating Cabinet has been expelled. The tax itself is the bait held out to the masses to ensnare them. This allurements is well chosen, if one believes the people of this Province is composed of idiots. But in this they are mistaken; the electors are intelligent enough to not allow themselves to be taken in by such gross allurements. (Cheers.) Let us look at things squarely in the face. What is after all that tax which they seem so much to dread? Let us first consider if the imposition of a tax was necessary, and we will afterwards examine if that tax is as onerous as they would have us to believe. Let us further consider if the upheaval to which they have submitted this province, and the extraordinary expenditure which will be the result of such an action, will not entail larger costs than the tax with which they endeavor to frighten us. I do not speak of the fatal blow dealt at the political institutions which are so dear to us. With a spirited and patriotic people no money value can be set upon such an act as this. (Cheers.) The tax in question became necessary on account of the great public works which the Government undertook or encouraged during these last years, and this at the request of all our politicians, irrespective of party. More than seven millions were needed for the Provincial North Shore Railway, and nearly two millions and a half as subsidies to private enterprises on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. These great undertakings are not yet completed. Some of them are even in need of additional aid to bring them to a successful issue. Would they desire, as the Lieutenant-Governor has been so unwisely

advised to do, that these subsidies be denied them? Could this be your wish, when you have imposed upon yourself such great sacrifices to promote one of these undertakings? Could it be your wish that the Province tie up its purse strings, and under the pretence of false economy leave imperilled this great national enterprise? Certainly not, and that small tax of fifteen cents could not cause you to give up the great undertaking. (Cheers.) This tax affects contracts of a higher value than \$200. Therefore, a transaction of \$300 would pay a duty of 15 cents, the first \$200 being at all times exempt from duty; but wills, marriage contracts, donations *entre-vifs* in direct line do not come under the jurisdiction of its law.

THE QUESTION OF TAXATION.

Let us calculate for an instant; there are 700 parishes in the Province of Quebec. This tax, from the most accurate calculation, will yield about \$175,000. Of this amount, the two-thirds or thereabouts, will be borne by bankers, brokers, real estate agents and speculators of all kinds—that is to say by the class which hardly ever pay taxes; and again, this tax was only temporary—it was only to last until the favorable decision of the arbitration between the two Provinces which will soon be rendered in England, and until the Provincial railway gives us the revenue which we expect from it. Here, then, is the great scarecrow for which our representative liberties are violated and the Province thrown into a state of agitation, the results of which cannot be foreseen. (Cheers.) Here is a session suddenly broken up, a great part of the labors of which will have to be begun over again. There is no exaggeration in saying that will entail an expenditure of \$40,000; then the general election, which cannot cost less than \$35,000; add to this the inevitable stoppage in the working of the public departments by the installation of new and inexperienced Ministers. Add again the loss of time, necessary expense entailed on the citizens individually by the general election; set down these expenses and loss of time at the very low figure of \$50 per parish, and tell me if there is not a dead loss at least equal to the tax they attempt to frighten you with and which would have been usefully expended, without any of the quarrels, disorders and scandals inseparable from the political agitation which we are entering into. (Cheers.) And we have not taken into consideration what will be the heaviest loss to the Province, the interest daily accumulating on the capital sunk in our railway enterprises, the carrying out of which must necessarily be delayed by this trick of ambitious and envious individuals. Nine millions of dollars are at stake in these enterprises. Suppose a delay of three months only, and you will have the pleasant little sum of \$135,000 to pay; and I leave out of the question the indirect damages caused by these delays, which will put back for a whole year, on account of the inclement season, the completion of these great works. Political aspirations are allowable; but when their realization costs so dear, it may be said that

they surpass folly and verge on crime. (Cheers.) Tell us not that we are the cause of all these disasters in refusing to submit to the new state of things, and supporting a ministry installed in seats robbed from us. Men of spirit, and this country has no other, would despise us if we could easily submit to so shameful a crime, without protesting in the name of the law, in the name of the constitution, and in the name of the free working of national representation. The whole responsibility of these disasters rests alone on those who have over-ridden the law, spurned the constitution, and trodden the liberties of Parliament under their feet. (Cheers.)

WHAT ARE THE TAXES.

They have spoken to you about taxes. Ask the people who cry against the taxes of the Local Government, which are the taxes it has imposed? Because, after all we must not be unjust. Will you, who listen to me at this moment, tell me? You pay a tax on tea, on sugar, on tobacco, on nearly everything that you use; but to whom do you pay this tax? To the Federal Treasury at Ottawa. Nearly all the resources of the Provincial Government are derived from the Federal grants and from the revenue of the Crown Lands. The only tax of any importance which we have is that on tavern-keepers and that imposed on judicial proceedings. Those who like to drink and those who like to go to law, are those on whom nearly all the weight of taxation rests in this Province. If you add to this a light duty to pay the costs of registration you have a complete list of the Provincial taxes. I challenge anyone to contradict me; the Province of Quebec is the least taxed State that exists if we take into account the perfect working of its system of administration. Is it then this small tax of fifteen cents that would make us feel miserable? This tax would be imposed by our opponents themselves, or they would replace it by an equivalent one, if by a chance on which they do not rely, they hold the position they have usurped.

THE PRETENCE OF ECONOMY.

I was speaking to you just now of a bait with which they will try to steal a march upon the people in this great battle, which is to be waged on the field of its liberties; I have proved to you that this cry against taxation was not sincere, and that those who uttered it have placed the Province in a far more trying position. I will now point out to you the other snare which will be set to entrap your confidence and your good faith: "economy, retrenchment in all the branches of the administration." Behold the everlasting programme of those who have no policy; behold the panacea—the "syrup that cures all evils"—which political charlatans sell in the market of the dupes. At all times this lime-twigg has caught sparrows. "Sow the seed of idiots," said a wag, "and you shall reap shareholders." Under the new rule it is intended to sow the seed of quackery, hoping that it will bring forth a crop of votes. (Laughter.)

We have seen those Governments of retrenchment at work; we saw them in 1863, in 1874; we see them still at Ottawa. In 1863 the people, in contempt of those small men, had nicknamed them, before expelling them, as "the Government of candle ends." Their economy, indeed, consisted in striking from the grants to our charitable institutions a few hundreds of dollars, and in ejecting into the street a few messengers or clerks without money and without protection. The Government inaugurated at Ottawa in 1874 also put on the worn-out cloak of "economy and retrenchment." What has been the result of that great programme? Upwards of four millions of new taxes, several hundreds additional public servants, and an enormous deficit increasing every day. And the Government which to day it is sought to impose upon the Province will be the mere pale reflection of its seniors of 1863 and 1874. There is nothing broad in the political views of those men; nothing to lead a country to the certain path of progress. Denial, vilification and quackery—there begins and there ends their political decalogue. (Cheers.) Did we not see them the other day, when the House of Assembly was rising in its indignation to protest against the violation of its rights, did we not see them meet those splendid bursts of parliamentary independence with quibbles, points of routine, questions of order? And when the House was called to hear its dismissal, in the midst of an unfinished session, one of their party was still on his legs, his eyes fixed on the pendulum, speaking against time, in order to stifle the last protestation of the House. (Cheers.)

THE TRUE ISSUE OF THE CONTEST.

Bear in mind these words of a profound statesman:—"Where great questions end, there begin small parties." Allow not the small *Rouge* party to hide from public view, by their meanness, by their *candle-ends policy*, the gravity of the question raised by their juggling ascent to power, so brazenly practised by its chiefs. There the stake is not about a petty tax of fifteen cents, or the salary of some poor clerks, or the expenses of a railway commissioner, nor even of a survey of the road: those are trifles well worthy of the party that never had, in the country, other support than prejudice, that trivial prejudice that lives but on pettiness; no! there is here a question of mightier and more serious import. As I told you, at the outset, and as I shall tell you at the close,—the liberty of the people has been violated, it is the chiefest of our rights that is menaced. To what amounts the existence of a few administrative errors? They can always be repaired, when the national representation retains, over the Government, the legitimate control bestowed on it by the constitution. What may turn out to be an irreparable evil, is the abandonment of that control, the abandonment of the national sovereignty. What becomes of the maxim that "*the people governs*," if it be allowed to a single man to remove the Government from the hands to which the people had confided it? (Cheers.) At all hazards,

save that principle from shipwreck! Let it be for us a rallying cry! Let us forget, for one day at least, our local dissensions, our belfry-quarrels, and stand in union around the standard of the constitution. Let our hearts swell with the circumstances, and let us not fail to seek in the past, in that past of noble struggles, the inspirations that shall guide us in the new battle that has been thrust upon us. The first to lay claim to Ministerial responsibility in this country was he, who is surnamed the great Bedard,—and he who did the most to enthrone, in our midst, the rule of Hoerty, was also one of ours, Lafontaine, aided by his noble friends, Morin and Baldwin. And need I recall to you the name of Cartier, the continuer of that great work, but yesterday our chief, the true type of a Conservative statesman, prudent and active, as much the enemy of demagogues as the faithful defender of our constitutional liberties? Such were our guides in the past, let them be our models in the present. (Cheers.)

Gentlemen, another name now rushes on my memory, the name of Papineau,—

"He, the mighty tribune, whom the frenzied crowd
"saluted every day with acclaim deep and loud."

His voice, his grand voice, replete with haughty ire.

His voice that inflamed his people with the fire

Of such bitter sarcasm, such triumphant lustre,

His voice that, daring tyrants face to face,
For forty years proclaimed the rights of all his race (1).

You know that piece of verse, the work of your own deputy in the Commons at Ottawa; and I put the question to himself, how could Papineau have merited to be extolled by a liberal tongue, if it be not by having wrestled during half his life against Governors of Provinces, those petty despots, who, not satisfied with reigning, desired also to govern according to their fancy.

In that struggle Papineau deserved well of his country, and, despite the faults of his life, his memory will remain as that of a great champion of the liberty of the people. (Cheers.) Would to God that the liberal party that he created respected his teachings! What, then, would Papineau say, he, the dismissed of Governors, if he now saw his heirs become the defenders and accomplices of the dismissal of those in whom the people had placed their confidence? What would he say? He would utter one of those terrific accents, whose echo has come down to us, and he would exclaim: "Impose silence on Spencer Wood, and let 'the people be heard.' (Loud cheers)

(1) Lui, le puissant tribun que la foule en d'émence
Saluait tous les jours d'une clameur immense.

Sa voix, sa grande voix aux sublimes colères,
Sa voix qui déchirait sur les flots populaires
Tant de sarcasme amer et d'éclats triomphaux,

Sa voix qui, des tyrans déconcertant l'audace,
Quarante ans proclama les droits de notre race.

—(L. H. Frechette.)

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